



Shepton Mallet Urban District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year Ending 31st December, 1947

Shepton Mallet Urban District Council

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH :

T. E. COULSON, M.D., F.R.C.S.E.

SANITARY INSPECTOR :

G. F. HAWKINS, CERT. S.I. JT. BOARD. CERT. R.S.I. (MEAT & OTHER FOODS).

CLERK :

A. D. STOCKDALE.

WINCANTON,

SOMERSET.

June, 1948.

TO THE
SHEPTON MALLET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1947.

1.—GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (in acres)	2278
Population (1947)	4816
Number of Inhabited Houses (1946)	1339
Rateable Value	£25,490
Produce of Penny Rate (estimated)	£101

Number of Inhabited Houses is based on the following :—

Dwelling Houses	1186
Prison Houses	6
Houses and Shops	75
Hotels and Inns	22
Clubs with Living Accommodation	2
Agricultural Dwelling Houses	22
Total	1313
Less voids (estimated)	15
	1298

SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

In addition to shops, offices, building trades and allied trades, the main sources of employment in the town are cider factories (2), breweries (2), shoe-making, glove factories (2), millers, bacon factory and meat products, railways (2), agricultural engineering, research chemists, general engineering (2) garages and motor engineering, dry-cleaning and dye-works, rope works, motor haulage.

There is very little unemployment other than that of a transitory nature.

2.—EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR.

BIRTHS.

Live Births :—	Males.	Females.	
Total	46	52	
Legitimate	44	50	
Illegitimate	2	2	Birth Rate :—20.5 per 1,000
Still Births :—	Males.	Females.	
Total	2	2	
Legitimate	1	1	
Illegitimate	1	1	Birth Rate :—0.50 per 1,000

DEATHS.

	Total.	Males.	Females.	
Deaths from all causes ...	54	29	25	Death Rate :—12.0 per 1,000

Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, child-birth :—

(a) From Sepsis	0
(b) From other causes	0

Deaths of Infants under One Year of age :—

Legitimate, 4 ; Illegitimate, 0 ; Total, 4.

Deaths of Infants under One Week	2
„ „ „ from One to Four Weeks	1
„ „ „ from One to Six Months	1
„ „ „ from Six to Twelve Months	0
Total	4

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	....	---	---	0
" " Whooping Cough (all ages)	---	---	---	0
" " Diarrhoea (under two years of age)	---	---	---	0

There has not been any excessive mortality during the year.

The total number of Deaths occurring in the District was 54, compared with 52 in 1946.

The chief causes of Death were :—

Cancer	....	....	....	5
Heart and Circulatory Diseases	....	....	....	12
Old Age	....	....	....	7
Cerebral Hæmorrhage	....	....	....	6

In all " Causes of Death " :

Those dying between the ages of 75 and 80 were	....	20
" " " " 81 and 85 were	....	2
" " " " 86 and 90 were	....	3
Those dying above the aged of 90 were	....	2

A total of 27 or 50% of the total Deaths.

3.—NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Diseases.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Isolation Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Diphtheria	3	1	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	3	1	0
Scarlet Fever	3	3	0
Pneumonia (all forms)	0	0	4
Whooping Cough	47	0	0
Measles	73	3	0
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis	1	0	0
Tuberculosis :—Total	8	0	4
(a) Respiratory	6	0	4
(b) Non-respiratory	2	0	0

The notification of Infectious Diseases in the District by Medical Practitioners was satisfactory except in cases of Pneumonia.

OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM.

No Cases Notified.

4.—CAUSES OF SICKNESS.

The cases of Scarlet Fever notified to me were of a mild type, and there were no deaths.

Pneumonia caused 4 deaths.

There was a fairly widespread epidemic of measles during June and July. The cases were of a mild type and there were no deaths.

5.—SUMMARY OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS, HOSPITAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE IN THE DISTRICT.

A.—PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.

- (1) General :—There are 2 Nurses in the District engaged in general district work, who are affiliated to the County Nursing Association.
- (2) For Infectious Diseases :—Some of the cases of infectious diseases were removed to the Isolation Hospital, the remainder were either nursed by their relatives or by nurses obtained from Nursing Homes or Hospitals outside the District.

B.—MIDWIVES.

There are 2 Certified Midwives practising in the District.

C.—CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

There is one Tuberculosis Dispensary in Charlton Road, provided and staffed by the County Council.

D.—HOSPITALS AVAILABLE FOR THE DISTRICT.

(1) Tuberculosis : None.

(2) Fever : One (The Joint Isolation Hospital, Shepton Mallet) to which the following cases were admitted during the year :—

Disease.	Total No. Admitted.	No. Died.
Scarlet Fever	13	0
For Observation	4	0
Injury to Wrist	1	0
Diphtheria	3	1
Erysipelas	1	0
Measles	6	0
Influenza	1	0
Tonsilitis	5	0
Whooping Cough	1	0
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	3	0
Poliomyelitis	3	1
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	0
Cerebellar Abscess	1	1
Chicken Pox	1	0
Scald	1	0
Meningitis	1	1
Bockhart's Impetigo	1	0
Vincent's Angina	1	0
Polioencephalitis	1	0
Pyorrhœa Alveolaris	1	0
Pemphigus	1	0
	51	4

(3) Other :—There is one District Hospital at Shepton Mallet for the treatment of general medical and surgical cases. There is no Public Assistance Institution, the building having been taken over by The County Council as an Institution for persons suffering from Mental Deficiency.

E.—INSTITUTIONAL PROVISION FOR UNMARRIED MOTHERS AND ILLEGITIMATE INFANTS : None.

Homeless Children : Hillworth House, staffed and equipped by the Somerset County Council.

F. AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

- (1) For Infectious Cases :—A Motor Ambulance is kept at the Isolation Hospital for the collection and removal of the Infectious Cases.
- (2) For Non-Infectious Cases and Accidents :—A Motor Ambulance supplied and equipped by the Shepton Mallet Urban District Council is kept at the Wells Road Garage, Shepton Mallet, Telephone 126 ; and in case of need additional ambulances are obtainable through the local branch of the B.R.C.S. and also from Wells and Radstock.

G.—SCABIES.—No cases of Scabies have been reported to me.

H.—GOVERNMENT EVACUATION SCHEME.

No evacuated children in the Urban District during 1947.

6.—LABORATORY WORK.

Examinations of bacteriological and pathological specimens are carried out at The Public Health Laboratory, Taunton : considerable use of this Laboratory has been made during the year.

A supply of Diphtheria Antitoxin is kept at The District Hospital, Shepton Mallet, and is supplied free on demand by Practitioners practising in the District.

7.—PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY.

There is one Sanitary Inspector and Housing and Sanitary Surveyor (a whole-time officer) and myself (a part-time officer). There is one Health Visitor in the District.

8.—WATER SUPPLIES.

From the result of routine samples taken during the year, it is evident that the quality of the water has been satisfactory. With regard to quantity, the Waterworks Company found it necessary for a time to curtail the supply at night for certain periods owing to the effect of the drought. The Company state, however, that as a result of such night precautions, the consumers were not unduly restricted and that no complaints were received by them on account thereof.

The water supply is still continuously treated by chlorination and de-chlorination. The plant was subjected to a very detailed overhaul shortly after the end of the year under review, the work being carried out by the manufacturers, whose expert gave a most satisfactory report thereon.

The whole of the Urban District is supplied by the Shepton Mallet Waterworks Company's mains, with the exception of certain outlying premises and a few properties not connected to such mains. A supply of main water was laid on to three cottages where the existing well supply was found to be unsatisfactory (these premises being those referred to in the report for 1946).

EXTENSIONS OR IMPROVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR.

- (a) Extension of main at Kingsland Road to afford supply to ten new bungalows on the Council's Housing Estate at Ridgeway.
- (b) Extension of main at West Shepton, for a distance of approximately 250 yards.

POST-WAR PROPOSALS.

The only extensions at present contemplated are :—

- (1) At Council's Housing Estate, Ridgeway, to meet requirements of housing programme.
- (2) New main from West Shepton via Hitchen Lane to connect to mains on new Housing Estate.

The following details relating to the Shepton Mallet Waterworks Company are taken from the Ministry of Health report :—

AREA OF SUPPLY.—Whole of urban district, together with certain sparsely populated parts of four parishes in the rural district.

Estimated population of the area is 4,534, of which 4,500 are in the urban district.

Company supplies practically the whole of its area.

Total daily consumption is 315,000 gallons (—79 g.p.h.p.d.).

Daily domestic consumption 240,000 gallons (—53 ditto).

The sources are three sets of springs on the slopes of the Mendips to the north of the town, rising from the Old Red Sandstone and the Carboniferous Limestone. The flow of these sources in the 1921 drought was 168,400 g.p.d., and in the 1934 drought 202,000 g.p.d. The winter flow of the sources is about 1 m.g.p.d., and for nine months of the year a flow of 500,000 can be relied on.

The report further states that the resources of the Company are ample in winter, but are inadequate for present consumption in a drought, and that the consumption is high and might be reduced by intensive waste inspection, but even then a new source will be required in the future.

9.—DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

No change during the year.

Post-War Proposals.—Nil.

The Council had arranged to call in a firm of Engineering Consultants to advise upon the modernisation of the Sewage Disposal Works, but cancelled (or deferred) the matter in view of the Government's White Paper upon the curtailment of capital expenditure.

10.—CAMPING SITES.

No Camping Sites have been registered in the District.

Generally the only cases of Camping which occurred were only of 2 or 3 days' duration, except in the case of The Fair Ground in Cook's Paddock, the duration of which is usually about one or two weeks.

11.—HOUSING.

Total Number of Applicants for Council Houses at the end of 1947, 300.

	Houses erected during year.		Houses in course of erection.		Conversion to flats or dwellings.
	Perm.	Temp.	Perm.	Temp.	
Local Authority	40		10		5 (commenced)
Private Enterprise	1		4		2
Totals	41		14		(5 commenced) 7 (2 completed)

During 1947, the Local Authority completed the erection of the first 40 (forty) houses upon the new housing estate at Ridgeway and commenced the erection of 10 (ten) bungalows for aged persons. It was also intended to proceed with the erection of a further 30 (thirty) houses as part of the 1947 housing programme, but this was cut by the Ministry of Health to 6 (six) houses, which, however, were not commenced at 31/12/47. All the above houses are permanent and of traditional construction.

In addition, the Council commenced the conversion of Sales House, previously unoccupied, into five flats.

Building Licences were issued during 1947 for the erection of five dwellinghouses by private enterprise, and by the end of the year one house had been completed and the others were in course of erection.

One dwelling was converted into two flats, by private enterprise.

It is apparent from the information given on housing applications and from further details ascertained on investigations regarding such applications, that the housing situation is very bad. Apart from the general shortage of accommodation, the general housing standard is low.

12.—MINISTRY OF HEALTH INQUIRIES.

None.

13.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) MILK :

1.—Total Number of Registered Dairy Farms	....	18
2.—Number of Retailers	....	6
3.—Number of Producer-Retailers included in 2	....	1
4.—Number of Licensed Pasteurising Plants	....	1
5.—Number of Heat-Treatment Plants not included in 4	....	0

The dairyman operating the plant referred to in (4) above was informed that the Council would not renew his licence to pasteurise after 31/12/47.

No. of T.T. LICENSES :

To Bottle and Retail (granted by Urban District Council)	2
To Retail (granted by Urban District Council)	1
To Retail Milk as Pasteurised	1

Two farmers distribute in the Shepton Mallet Urban District, but their farms are in the Shepton Mallet Rural District.

(b) MEAT SUPERVISION :

Number of Licenced Slaughter Houses in the District	4
Number of Registered Slaughter Houses in the District	0
Total	4

Names of any in use under the Ministry of Food :

The C.W.S. Bacon Factory, Charlton Road,
Shepton Mallet.

Number of Premises where Horses are Slaughtered for human consumption	....	....	....	0
Knackers' Yards—Licenced	....	....	....	0

ICE-CREAM :—

No. of Premises Registered for				
(a) Manufacture and sale	....	....	....	3
(b) Manufacture only	....	....	....	Nil.
(c) Sale only	....	....	....	2

All the local manufacturers use the cold-mix method. In the case of the two premises registered for sale only, the ice-cream is retailed wrapped.

Ice-cream is also sold at a cinema and restaurant, which are exempt from registration under Sec. 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

No samples were taken.

RIVER POLLUTION.

The effluents from the Council's Sewage Farm have been kept under observation and necessary action taken from time to time to prevent pollution of the River Sheppey.

The Council are also responsible for the cleaning of the River, and most of the River within the urban district was cleaned during the year.

THE FOLLOWING FACTS HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO ME BY THE SANITARY INSPECTOR :—

DETAILS OF SANITARY INSPECTIONS :—

Total Number of Inspections under all headings	....	....	846
Ditto informal Notices served	....	....	20
Public Health Act	....	11 (4)	
Housing Act	....	2 (1)	
Factories Act	....	2 (2)	
P.H. (Meat) Regulations	....	4 (4)	
Food and Drugs Act	....	1 (1)	
Ditto informal notices complied with	....	....	12
Ditto statutory notices served	....	....	1
Ditto statutory notices complied with	....	....	1
Number of inspections carried out under Factories Act	....	....	10
Ditto ditto Shops Act, 1934	....	....	Nil.

No. of sanitary inspections of schools, giving particulars of work or alterations effected as a result of notices served, informal or formal :

No. of inspections	....	....	2
Works or alterations effected	....	....	Nil.

HOUSING :

1.—No. of houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health or Housing Acts	....	....	160
No. of inspections made for the purpose	....	....	198
2.—No. of dwellinghouses inspected and recorded under Housing Consolidated Regulations	....	....	6
No. of inspections made for the purpose	....	....	6
3.—No. of dwellinghouses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	....	....	14
4.—No. of dwellinghouses (exclusive of those referred to in the previous sub-heading) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	....	....	78

REMEDY OF DEFECTS WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE :

No. of dwellinghouses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	5
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ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS :

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936.

No. of statutory notices served	1
No. of statutory notices complied with	....	....	1

HOUSING AND OVERCROWDING :

No. of houses inspected for use in connection with Evacuation or inadequately-housed persons	....	....	5
No. of inspections made for the purpose	....	....	11
No. of properties under requisition by the Council	....	....	26
No. of families housed in requisitioned premises	....	....	29
No. of requisitioned premises released during year	....	....	1
No. of inspections of requisitioned premises (for purposes of repair, maintenance, etc.)	....	....	60

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

1.—MILK SUPPLY. Details already submitted.

No. of inspections of cowsheds	....	....	....	7
No. of inspections of milk-shops (including dairies).	....	....	....	7

2.—MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

(a) The following particulars relate to the C.W.S. Bacon Factory :—

No. of visits to slaughterhouse	....	....	....	40
No. of post-mortem examinations	....	....	....	73
Total number of pigs slaughtered	....	....	....	9,998

Diseased conditions found :

No. of whole carcasses	Weight.
No. of whole carcasses	31 4,747 lbs.
„ heads	939 14,896 lbs.
„ plucks	504 3,704 lbs.
„ kidneys	42 10½ lbs.
„ steaks	46 46½ lbs.
„ part carcasses	3 113
Total weight	23,717 lbs.

(b) No. of inspections carried out at other food premises :—

(i) Premises registered for the sale or manufacture of
ice-cream, etc. 13

(ii) Food premises otherwise subject to the Food and Drugs Act,
1938 :—

Slaughterhouses	....	....	....	5
Butchers' shops and stalls	....	....	....	28
Fishmongers	....	....	....	3
Grocers	....	....	....	49
Greengrocers and fruiterers	....	....	....	5
Food-preparing premises	....	....	....	10
Restaurants	....	....	....	2
Miscellaneous food premises	....	....	....	12

(c) Particulars of unsound foodstuffs voluntarily surrendered as being
unfit for human consumption :—

	No.	Weight.
Beef, carcase and organs	1	301 lbs.
Sheeps' plucks	5	8 lbs.
Kippers	11 boxes	308 lbs.
Smoked haddock	1 „	35 lbs.
Silver pollack	1 „	70 lbs.
Ice-cream	1 consignment.	
		Approx. Net Weight.
		lbs.
Oranges	4½ cases	364
Lemons	2 „	120
Tomatoes	2½ boxes.	70
Seed potatoes	9½ sacks.	1,064

Preserved and Tinned Foods :—				No. of tins.	Lbs.
Bacon	....	....	....	2	2
Lambs' tongues	....	....	....	2	1½
Sausages	....	....	....	2	3
Meat paste (pate)	....	....	....	1	¼
Irish stew	....	....	....	1	1
Veal loaf	....	....	....	1	¾
Pork luncheon meat	....	....	....	10	39½
Stewed steak	....	....	....	22	22
Rabbit	....	....	....	1	1
Brisket of beef	....	....	....	1	4
Corned beef	....	....	....	24	71
Meat and vegetable ration	....	....	....	7	7
*Tinned fruits	....	....	....	1,180	2,366
Jam	....	....	....	9	17
Marmalade	....	....	....	8	20
Golden syrup	....	....	....	1	2
Minced meat	....	....	....	1	2
Soups (various)	....	....	....	16	16
Baked beans	....	....	....	27	24½
Peas	....	....	....	63	123
Other vegetables	....	....	....	27	54
Macaroni cheese	....	....	....	2	2
Milk, condensed	....	....	....	26	26
Milk, evaporated	....	....	....	122	116
Salmon	....	....	....	25	13
Sardines	....	....	....	2	½
Pilchards	....	....	....	11	11
Other fish	....	....	....	29	31
Fish paste (spread)	....	....	....	7	2
Dates	....	....	....	....	4
Dried peaches	....	....	....	....	90
Prunes	....	....	....	....	156
Figs	....	....	....	....	28

Sundries :—

Breakfast cereals	....	....	28 pkts.	20½
Flour	....	....	4 „	8
Suet (shredded)	....	....	12 „	6
Semolina	....	....	1 „	1
Dried egg	....	....	10 „	3
Coffee	....	....	1 tin.	½
Malted milk	....	....	1 „	½
Meat pies	....	....	5	1
Apricot pudding	....	....	1 tin.	1

*The number of tins of fruit condemned includes 1,117 tins, each of 2 lbs., which formed part of a large consignment of salvaged goods sent to a local factory for examination and re-packing.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

No. of enquiries in cases of infectious disease	....	....	8
No. of visits for the purposes	....	....	11
No. of visits in connection with disinfection, in addition to those under previous sub-heading	....	....	4
No. of rooms fumigated	....	....	17

MISCELLANEOUS.

No. of visits in connection with water supply	....	....	10
No. of water samples taken	....	....	4
No. of samples taken at Swimming Pool	....	....	2
No. of visits in connection with Drainage	....	....	28
Ditto	ditto	Defective sewers	2
Ditto	ditto	Sewage disposal	20
Ditto	ditto	Refuse collection	13
Ditto	ditto	Refuse disposal	43
Ditto	ditto	Offensive trades	10
Ditto	ditto	Bakehouses	2
Ditto	ditto	Public Conveniences	15
Ditto	ditto	Rats & Mice Destruction	21
Ditto	ditto	Smoke observations	2

No. of visits in connection with	Miscellaneous premises	....	17
Ditto	ditto	Repair and maintenance of	
		Council houses	84
Ditto	ditto	Applications for housing	
		Accommodation	70
No. of visits to houses in connection with application for			
Building Licences	....	....	55
No. of visits to verminous premises	....	....	2
No. of rooms disinfested	....	....	3
No. of houses inspected on complaint	....	....	19
No. of other premises inspected on complaint	....	....	2

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

The carrying on of offensive trades at one premises, in respect of which a number of complaints had been received and where conditions generally were unsuitable, was discontinued, at the end of the year.

REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

The Council carry out a weekly collection of house refuse throughout the whole of the Urban District. It was decided to replace the adapted lorry for a modern low-loading refuse collection motor lorry fitted with sliding dust covers and hydraulic tipping gear ; a model C.K.3 10 cubic yards capacity Karrier vehicle was ordered and was put into operation immediately after its delivery at the end of October, 1947. Refuse is still disposed of by means of controlled tipping on a site adjoining the S. & D. Station at Charlton, but as this is nearly full, another tip has been rented at Winsor Hill.

MILK (SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS) ORDERS.

A dairyman holding a licence from the Urban District Council authorising him to pasteurise milk was notified that the premises and equipment generally were not considered suitable for that purpose, and that it was not proposed to recommend the Council to renew the licence on its expiry at 31st December, 1947.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

T. E. COULSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

